FAMED AUTHOR OF **PSYCHO**

ROBERT BLOCH

HELL ON EARTH

Graphic adaptation by KEITH GIFFEN and ROBERT LOREN FLEMING

SCIENCE FICTION GRAPHIC NOVEL • SF 1 • $5.95/CAN $7.95

DC

"Would you go to hell for $100,000?" asked Professor Keith.

"Brother," replied fantasy writer Guy Roberts, "just show me the money and tell me when the next train leaves."

This is the story of three people who raise the Devil...and their own

HELL ON EARTH

ROBERT BLOCH

"Right up there among the best!"
—Ray Bradbury

"Robert Bloch is witty, personable, and gentle... as a writer he is the pro's pro, as a friend he is nonpareil!"
—Stephen King

"Robert Bloch is a great joy to read and a great joy to know, for he is a splendid human being as well as a splendid writer."
—Manly Wade Wellman

"For fifty years Robert Bloch has been thinking up images and psychologically twisted plots that have made his name worthy of being mentioned in the same hushed whispers as those used reverently for the names Lovecraft, Poe, Bierce, and Blackwood. He is our national treasure of terror."
—Harlan Ellison

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HELL ON EARTH

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HELL ON EARTH

By Robert Bloch

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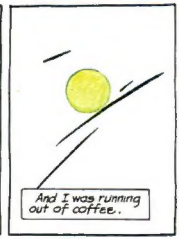
SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE TO BECOME WITCHCRAFT DEN

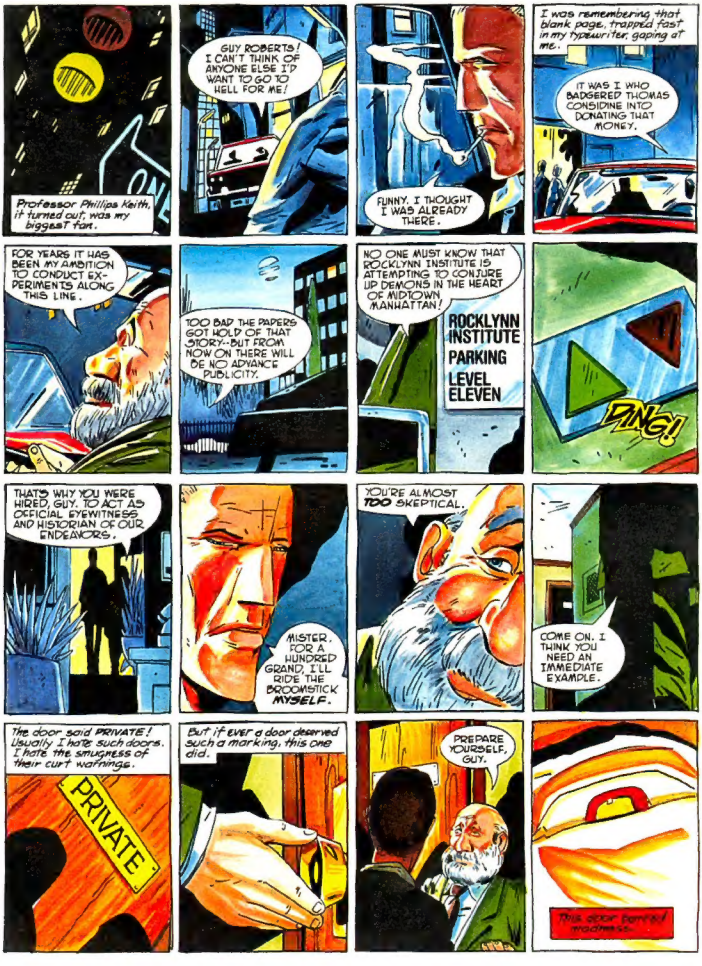
The world-famous Rocklynn Institute will soon be transformed into a rendezvous for goblins and demons, according to the plans of Thomas M. Considine, wealthy philanthropist.

Considine has authorized a donation of $500,000 to be used in what he describes as a "scientific study of sorcery and Black Magic."

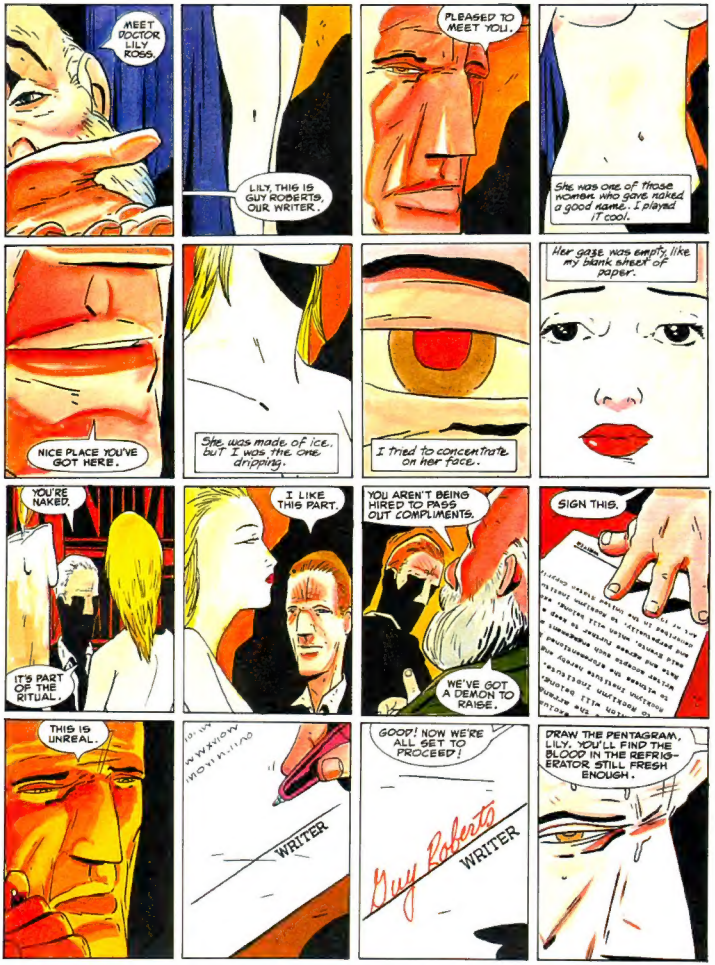
Professor Phillips Keith today announced that Rocklynn Institute is "seriously contemplating" the possibilities of the project. "Ancient magic may have as its basis scientific fact," Keith declared. "Such a study might yield valuable results."

Vendors of black cats, dried toads, and love-philtres may find it worth their while to apply at Rocklynn Institute in the near future.




Professor Phillips Keith, it turned out, was my biggest fan.
GUY ROBERTS! I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE ELSE I'D WANT TO GO TO HELL FOR ME!
FUNNY. I THOUGHT I WAS ALREADY THERE.
I was remembering that blank page, trapped fast in my typewriter, gaping at me..
IT WAS I WHO BADGERED THOMAS CONSIDINE INTO DONATING THAT MONEY.
FOR YEARS IT HAS BEEN MY AMBITION TO CONDUCT EXPERIMENTS ALONG THIS LINE.
TOO BAD THE PAPERS GOT HOLD OF THAT STORY--BUT FROM NOW ON THERE WILL BE NO ADVANCE PUBLICITY.
NO ONE MUST KNOW THAT ROCKLYNN INSTITUTE IS ATTEMPTING TO CONJURE UP DEMONS IN THE HEART OF MIDTOWN MANHATTAN!
ROCKLYNN INSTITUTE PARKING LEVEL ELEVEN
DING!
THAT'S WHY YOU WERE HIRED, GUY. TO ACT AS OFFICIAL EYEWITNESS AND HISTORIAN OF OUR ENDEAVORS.
MISTER. FOR A HUNDRED GRAND, I'LL RIDE THE BROOMSTICK MYSELF.
YOU'RE ALMOST TOO SKEPTICAL.
COME ON. I THINK YOU NEED AN IMMEDIATE EXAMPLE.
The door said PRIVATE! Usually I hate such doors. I hate the smugness of their curt warnings.
PRIVATE
But if ever a door deserved such a marking, this one did.
PREPARE YOURSELF, GUY.
This door bears evil madness.

Black madness, in a velvet draped room.
Red madness, in the flickering prayers working demonic Eyes. From shadowy niches.
THE EIGHTH STEPWORD OF HEAVEN
NECRONOMICON
The Tables and shelvings were modern, but they groomed with the monuments of forgotten nightmares.
There were shiny MENN refrigerators in one corner, but they bulged with unnameable cofcasses.
It was a room torn from the Fifteenth Century, a room torn from ancient dreams.
There were queerly bubbling vats near a small open fire.
We stood in a dark chamber, hidden in the topmost recesses of a modern skyscraper--
--a dark chamber reeking of blood, musk, hashish--
--and the Tomb.
Behind us, the iron door clanged closed.
I noticed the floor, crisscrossed with pentagrams and zodiacal designs drawn in blue chalk, phosphorescent paint, and some substance that yielded a dull, nasty red.
For just an instant, my eyes ran a spidery pattern across the red glare and black shadow of that room.
Then something rose out of the farther gloom, something moved in shroud-white silence across the floor.
I jumped two feet.


MEET DOCTOR LILY ROSS.
LILY, THIS IS GUY ROBERTS, OUR WRITER.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
She was one of those women who gave naked a good name. I played it cool.
NICE PLACE YOU'VE GOT HERE.
She was made of ice, but I was the one dripping.
I tried to concentrate on her face.
Her gaze was empty, like my blank sheet of paper.
YOU'RE NAKED.
IT'S PART OF THE RITUAL.
I LIKE THIS PART.
YOU AREN'T BEING HIRED TO PASS OUT COMPLIMENTS.
WE'VE GOT A DEMON TO RAISE.
SIGN THIS.
THIS IS UNREAL.
WRITER
GOOD! NOW WE'RE ALL SET TO PROCEED!
Guy Roberts
WRITER
DRAW THE PENTAGRAM, LILY. YOU'LL FIND THE BLOOD IN THE REFRIGERATOR STILL FRESH ENOUGH.

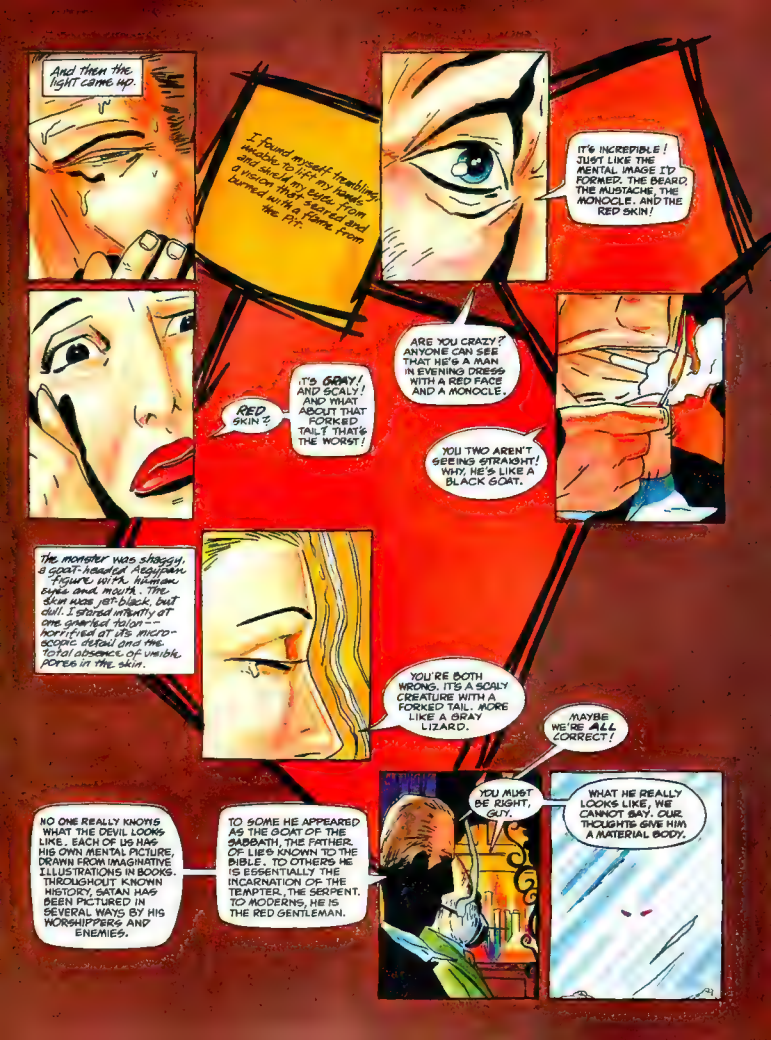
RECITE THE CHANTS AND LIGHT THE FIRES, MY DEAR.
AND DON'T WORRY-- IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, I'LL SHOOT TO KILL.
LET ME GUESS.
SILVER BULLETS?
VERY EFFECTIVE AGAINST WEREWOLVES, VAMPIRES, AND GHOULS, AND DEMONS SOMETIMES.
TODAY WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CONJURE A DRACONIBUS, A WINGED DEMON WITH FANGS AND BLACK SCALES.
Lily Ross began to chant as Kevin gave me the complete rundown.
He was applying sound scientific principles to the practice of witchcraft.
It had taken him years to make the connection.
More years were spent acquiring the necessary implements.
Keith was meticulous. He built a library of the arcane, weeding the genuine from the specious, piecing together fragments.
Each incantation received an exact, modern translation.
Each spell was subject to trial and error.
Today, Type B blood would be used as the variable.
In case of failure, they'd try Type A.
It was basic High School Chemistry.

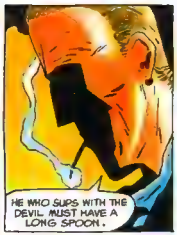
NOW, LILY, READ THE INVOCATION IN ITS ORIGINAL LATIN.
If it hadn't been for the one hundred thousand dollars, I'd have quit right then.
Not because it was all so funny.
Because it was serious.
Here, in this skyscraper tower, I suddenly realized that I was closer to hell than I would be in the bowels of the earth.
Here stood the magic circle, the wizard, the witch.
Here was the linkage between Man and Mystery.
Lily Rose began to sway.
Her red lips started the first syllable. Then broke the unholy silence.
HERE, I'LL PUT A FLOWER IN YOUR BUTTONHOLE. SOMETHING CONVENTIONAL.
Suddenly, Keith was gesturing toward the ceiling, pointing at the glass cage, suspended there.
GUY! IF THE DEMON APPEARS, WE WANT IT ALIVE! THE TOP BUTTON LOWERS THE CAGE!
My head was pounding.
YES. I--I UNDERSTAND.
I was looking at the blood.
For the first time, I realized what an incantation meant.
It was a call to a demon.

Now I knew the truth of the power of the word.
The word used in prayer.
The word used in black summonses.
The words that wouldn't come those long, long hours at the type-writer.
I was their captive.
I was their victim.
Then everything began to melt.
Through water I saw Lily Ross's shimmering silver figure.
I watched the pentagram as it wriggled like a serpent.
Then I saw words forming on an empty page.
The words were made of cut glass and were imbedded in the page, which was Lily Ross's face.
Would you go to hell? they said.
-for a hundred-
-thousand-
-dollars-
-?-

WAKE UP!
OH... WHAT HAPPENED?
WE'VE FAILED!
BUT I FELT SOMETHING.
SOMETHING...
PURE SELF-HYPNOSIS. IT DIDN'T WORK.
LILY, LET ME SEE THE COPY OF THE INCANTATION.
DAMNATION, GIRL!
THIS ISN'T THE RICHALMUS RITUAL! IT'S THAT ONE ALMOST LIKE IT!
WHAT?! IT CAN'T BE!
IT IS. GORGIOSO'S INVOCATION OF THE DEVIL.
Then the roaring started again, and this time, there was no question of self-hypnosis.
The thunderous crescendo swept through our bodies, tore at our brains.
Within the Pentagram, a black shadow coalesced and began to move.
Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Lily Rose's hands tremble; saw the crumpled scrap of paper fall from her fingers.
It was the parchment from which she had read the incantation -- the WRONG incantation.
The one that summoned up the Devil.

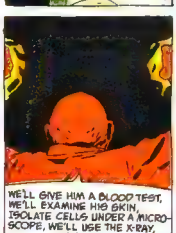
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
Keith retrieved the fallen parchment, but it was a futile gesture..
The presence crouched in the PENTAGRAM, GATHERING ITSELF as I gasped, reveling in the actuality of its new physical existence.
Like a child being born and realizing it.
GASP!
But this was no child. There was nothing youthful in the ancient stink of relish in those ageless eyes.
He was back at last.
"HE'S ON EARTH!"
The fires in those slitted eyes had burned long before the steaming gases that created the planet.
Suddenly, it stepped forward, with a foot black and misshapen. Hoof-like. CLOVEN!
My own fear mixed with desperate, swift measures.
PLEASE, GOD.
CLICK
CLANG!
CLANG!
CLANG!
KATHUDDD!
:pant pant pant: DID IT: pant pant: THANK GOD! pant pant: THANK GOD..
I thought of those long, long hours at the typewriter and the words that wouldn't come.
The Devil was trapped, but I, at last, was free.

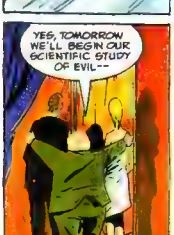

And then the light came up.
I found myself trembling, unable to lift my hands and shield my eyes from a vision that seared and burned with a flame from the Pit.
IT'S INCREDIBLE! JUST LIKE THE MENTAL IMAGE I'D FORMED. THE BEARD, THE MUSTACHE, THE MONOCLE. AND THE RED SKIN!
ARE YOU CRAZY? ANYONE CAN SEE THAT HE'S A MAN IN EVENING DRESS WITH A RED FACE AND A MONOCLE.
IT'S GRAY! AND SCALY! AND WHAT ABOUT THAT FORKED TAIL? THAT'S THE WORST!
RED SKIN?
YOU TWO AREN'T SEEING STRAIGHT! WHY, HE'S LIKE A BLACK GOAT.
The monster was shaggy, a goat-headed Assyrian figure with human eyes and mouth. The skin was jet-black but dull. I stared intently at one gnarled talon--horrified at its microscopic detail and the total absence of visible pores in the skin.
YOU'RE BOTH WRONG. IT'S A SCALY CREATURE WITH A FORKED TAIL. MORE LIKE A GRAY LIZARD.
MAYBE WE'RE ALL CORRECT!
YOU MUST BE RIGHT, GUY.
WHAT HE REALLY LOOKS LIKE, WE CANNOT SAY. OUR THOUGHTS GIVE HIM A MATERIAL BODY.
NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHAT THE DEVIL LOOKS LIKE. EACH OF US HAS HIS OWN MENTAL PICTURE, DRAWN FROM IMAGINATIVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN BOOKS. THROUGHOUT KNOWN HISTORY, SATAN HAS BEEN PICTURED IN SEVERAL WAYS BY HIS WORSHIPPERS AND ENEMIES.
TO SOME HE APPEARED AS THE GOAT OF THE SABBATH, THE FATHER OF LIES KNOWN TO THE BIBLE. TO OTHERS HE IS ESSENTIALLY THE INCARNATION OF THE TEMPTER, THE SERPENT. TO MODERNS, HE IS THE RED GENTLEMAN.



PERHAPS THEY ARE WISER THAN YOU SCIENTISTS THINK. THEY HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THIS CREATURE FOR LONG CENTURIES, AND THEIR WISDOM SHOULD BE HEEDED.

The black body crouched there, huddled up away from the glass, but with flaming evil in its eyes.





THE BOTTOMLESS PIT
This place was popular with the theater crowd and the literary set.
It's where I went when I wasn't getting anywhere.
YES, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT I'M MARRIED.
FIFTEEN YEARS. LIKE A PRISON SENTENCE. FIFTEEN YEARS OF HARD LABOR.
EIGHT KIDS. FIVE IN PAPERBACK, THREE IN HARDCOVER.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
OH, JUST A LITTLE ASTROPHYSICS AND BIOCHEMISTRY AND THE JOB AT ROCKLYNN AS KEITH'S ASSISTANT.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIM.
THAT EXCITEMENT TODAY UNNERVED HIM. I HOPE HE'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT TOMORROW.
RELAX. THE WORST THING KEITH WILL BE SUFFERING FROM TOMORROW IS A HANGOVER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHY, HE'S HERE!
AND HE'S WITH A WOMAN!
THAT'S PUTTING IT MILDLY! HE'S GOT A WOMAN AND A HALF THERE. THAT'S EVE VERNON, THE SINGER IN ON THE BEAM.
AND THAT'S SCOTCH ON HIS TABLE!
KEITH looked like a man who had everything he wanted.
He looked like a man who had the devil by the tail.

Keith laughed until his face reddened.
He danced with Eve.
Then he tried to dance with the girls in the floor show.
He drank two bottles of scotch, solo.
At last he started to sing, drunkenly, at the top of his lungs.
DISGUSTING.
PRIVATE
When we reached the laboratory door, it was ajar.
PROFESSOR KEITH!
OH, NO!
POOR GUY.
WHEN HE WAKES UP, HE'S GOING TO HAVE A TWO-BOTTLE SCOTCH HANGOVER.
PROFESSOR KEITH.
LET'S GO, S.R. SLEEP IT OFF SOMEWHERE ELSE.
RELEASE ME!
HUH?
I'M ALL RIGHT. FEEL SPLENDID, PERFECTLY SPLENDID!
BUT--
NO TIME FOR A CONFERENCE, MY DEAR! I'VE GOT TO FIND CONSIDINE.
NEED MORE MONEY FROM HIM, AT ONCE!
YOU TWO STAY HERE, KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!
SEE YOU TONIGHT AT THE TEST-TUBE BALL.

TEST-TUBE BALL?
YES, SOCIETY MASQUERADE. FUND-RAISER FOR THE ROCKLYNN INSTITUTE.
BUT WHAT DOES PROFESSOR KEITH WANT AT SUCH A GATHERING? HE NEVER DANCES OR GOES IN FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS.
YOU FORGET LAST NIGHT.
THAT'S JUST THE POINT--I CAN'T FORGET LAST NIGHT. IT WAS SO UNLIKE HIM. HE ISN'T WELL, I'M SURE OF IT.
HE ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO ISN'T WELL.
Satan squatted, half-slumping on the floor. His red eyes flickered, but they were sullenly fainter in their fire.
And in those eyes, I read not hate, but--recognition!
Then the creature bent down and picked up a shiny sliver from the floor of its cell. It was chalk--the phosphorescent stuff used to draw the Pentagram.
The bony fingers moved, slowly, painfully tracing something on the wall of the glass cage.
SQUEAK SQUEAK
TURN OUT THE FLAME OF THE BRAZIER.
SQUEAK SQUEAK
the phosphorescent letter glowed in the dark. The devil was writing!
SQUEAK SQUEAK
QUICKLY! STOP
TOO LATE. HE
AND I KNOW
SQUEAK SQUEAK
SQUEAK SQUEAK

It might have been cunning on the thing's part--the cunning of a friend.

Anything was possible in a world gone mad.

We had the Devil in a cage. Who in this room would have believed that?

There would be no dancing for us tonight.

HERE HE IS.

All at once the conversation seemed to die away. Women stopped talking and the fat paws of businessmen tightened around their cigars.

WHAT A DISGUISE!
PERFECT! EVEN THE CLUB FOOT!

I could have choked the little butcher who brought THAT to my attention. CLUB FOOT.

CLOVEN HOOF.

The red figure stalked through the parted lane in the crowd, proud as Lucifer.

GOOD EVENING, CONSIDINE.
I'VE COME TO STEAL YOU AWAY.

WE HAVE BUSINESS TOGETHER.

THAT'S CONSIDINE, MR. MONEY-BAGS.
I FIGURED.

JUST BE A MOMENT, KEITH, OLD MAN. MUST COLLECT MY PARTNER, YOU KNOW.

PAST? WINTERSGREEN! COME ALONG NOW.

SOMETHING'S UP.

OUT OF OUR WAY, YOU FOOL!
HEY! GO TO HELL, MAN!
THERE HE GOES.
WE'RE TOO LATE!
STAIRS!
STAIRS
PUFF PUFF! TWO MORE FLIGHTS TO GO.
HURRY, LILY! WE CAN CATCH HIM.
DAMN!
TAXI! TAXI!
I'M OFF-DUTY.
OH, YEAH?
Lily and I didn't say anything during the cab ride. I tried not to look at her.
I was afraid that my eyes were as frightened as hers.
Hurtling down the black, gaping mouths of midnight streets, riding the wind behind the red cloak of Satan...
...this wasn't New York anymore, but a scene out of a medieval nightmare.
We both knew where Keith was going.
Our destination was clear.
PRIVATE

BUT IT'S MONSTROUS! THE DEVIL IN A CAGE!

I SUPPOSE IT'S ALL VERY INTERESTING, SCIENTIFICALLY, BUT WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO-- EXHIBIT THIS CREATURE TO THE PUBLIC OR SOMETHING OF THE SORT ?

POWERFUL, KEITH ?

WHAT UTTER ROT!

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT, WE'RE NOT CHILDREN, TO BE FRIGHTENED BY BOGEYMEN.

THE MASTER OF THE GREAT BLACK LODGE ? THAT'S THE TITLE OF YOUR BOOK, GUY.

PROFESSOR KEITH MUST HAVE FORMED HIS ENTIRE IMPRESSION OF THE DEVIL FROM READING THAT ONE STORY.

HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY, KEITH ? ARE YOU UTTERLY MAD ? FIRST YOU SHOW UP IN A MEPHISTO COSTUME, THEN YOU BRING US TO LOOK AT THIS FREAK. THIS ANIMAL HYBRID OF YOURS, AND NOW YOU BABBLE INSANITIES.

YES, CONSIDINE IS RIGHT. WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE.

I suddenly realized that there would never be a better cue for my entrance.
KEITH! THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!
YOU'VE GOT TO SNAP OUT OF IT NOW, BEFORE THE DEVIL TAKES COMPLETE CONTROL OF YOU!
YOUR IDEA SEEMS LIKE THE BEST ONE, WINTER-GREEN. SHALL WE HIT THE ROAD?
WE DON'T WANT TO WEAR OUT OUR WELCOME, SIR!
Then I caught a glimpse of the figure in the cage, and my heart sank.
It was Professor Keith.
YOU'VE ALREADY TAKEN HIM.
TAKEN---?
I DIDN'T HAVE TO TAKE.
I WAS INVITED!
Lily screamed as I sprang at its throat.
Sheer instinct drove me on. The same instinct that guides a man to crush a wriggling serpent.
Even when he knows the serpent is about to strike!
YOU'RE ON FIRE! MY FINGERS ARE BURNING!!
Demon breath, seared my face. Demon eyes, unblinking, with fury!
It began to laugh.
It was crushing my skull. The pressure was unbearable, unbelievable.
TO BE WRITTEN POSTHUMOUSLY.
PERHAPS YOU CAN USE THE EXPERIENCE IN YOUR NEXT BOOK.

It didn't laugh long.
I had figured right. All those altars of naked, living flesh weren't around just for effect. Satan was HOT.
Until, that is, I sent a chill up his spine.
Of course, that much had been speculation. I had done some hard research.
GIVES NEW MEANING TO THE WORD HELL, DON'T IT, PAL?
I'M SURPRISED I WAS ABLE TO HIT SUCH A SMALL TARGET.
I'LL KILL YOU
C'MON. OPEN YOUR MOUTH.
OPEN UP! SAY "AAHH."
CLOSE ENOUGH!
NOW AND
MARY PRAY
OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN
IN THE HOUR OF OUR MOTHER
FOR OUR SINNERS TO TAKE
WILL BE DONE ON EARTH
UP!
AND THE
HAND OF
THIS WOMAN IN HOLY
AS IT IS IN ASHES TO ASH
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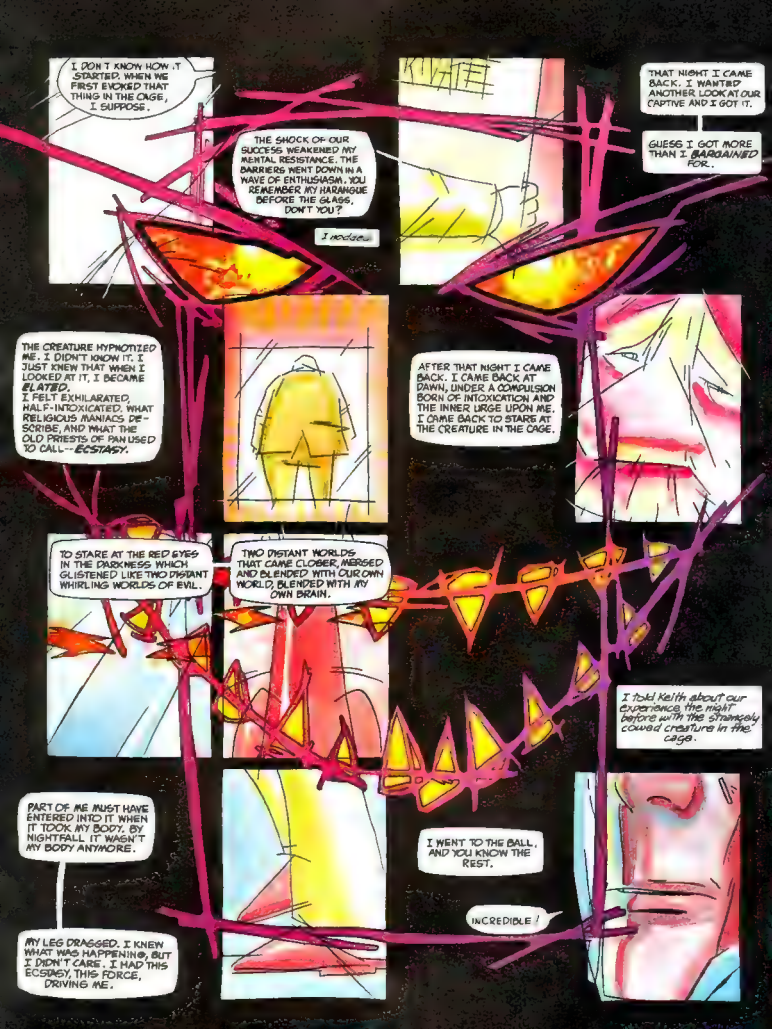
OF THE NAME OF THE
FATHER AND THE SO
FOREVER AND EVER
LORD SHALL BE FOR
DELIVER US
FROM EVIL FOREVER

A hideous stench arose.
In a moment it was over.
I--I THOUGHT IT WOULD KILL YOU. UNTIL YOU THREW THE ACID IN ITS FACE.
ACID?
ACID, HELL--THAT WAS HOLY WATER!
The slumping figure behind the glass was gone. In its place once more was Satan, Lord of the Sabbath.
WHAT... HAPPENED?
The redness of Kaitha skin had faded out slowly. The contours of his body had altered subtly, almost before our eyes. I told him the whole story.
YES, IT WAS THE HOLY WATER THAT DID IT, ALL RIGHT. PURE INSPIRATION ON YOUR PART, GUY.
PURE DESPERATION IS MORE LIKE IT.
I MUST HAVE BEEN...PRETTY BAD.
YOU WERE EVIL. UTTERLY EVIL.
BUT WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?
He all turned toward the glass cage. Yellow, rotted fangs sneered in malignant fury.
YOU CAN'T REALLY BELIEVE--
YOU SAW ME. IT WAS A CLEAR CASE OF WHAT THE ANCIENTS CALLED DEMONIC POSSESSION.

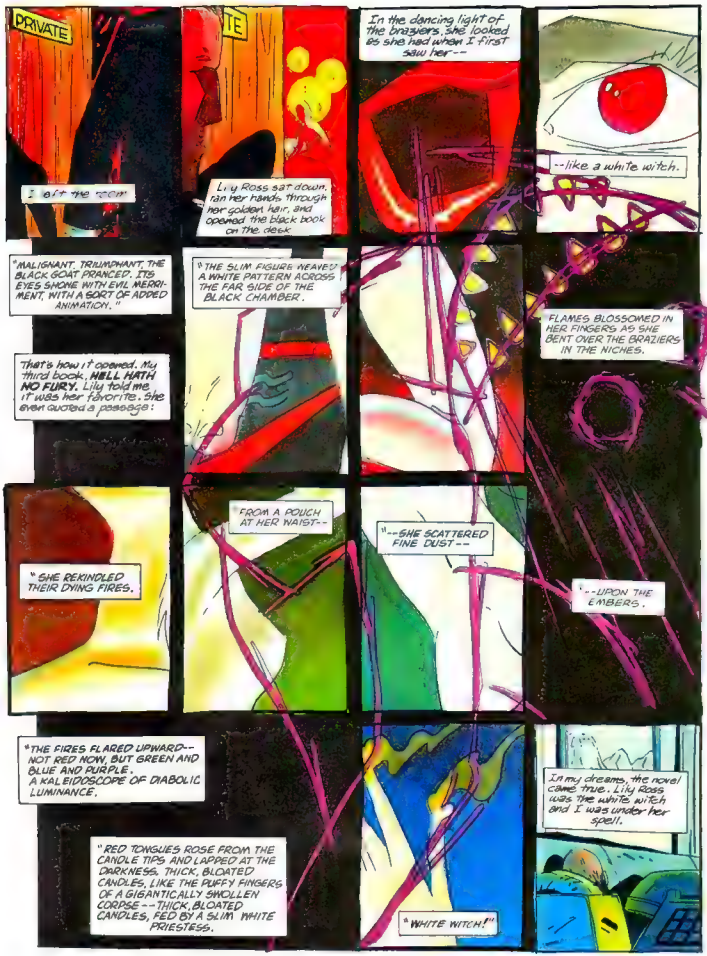

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT STARTED. WHEN WE FIRST EVOKED THAT THING IN THE CAGE, I SUPPOSE.
THE SHOCK OF OUR SUCCESS WEAKENED MY MENTAL RESISTANCE. THE BARRIERS WENT DOWN IN A WAVE OF ENTHUSIASM. YOU REMEMBER MY HARANGUE BEFORE THE GLASS, DON'T YOU?
I nodded.
THAT NIGHT I CAME BACK. I WANTED ANOTHER LOOK AT OUR CAPTIVE AND I GOT IT.
GUESS I GOT MORE THAN I BARGAINED FOR...
THE CREATURE HYPNOTIZED ME. I DIDN'T KNOW IT. I JUST KNEW THAT WHEN I LOOKED AT IT, I BECAME ELATED. I FELT EXHILARATED, HALF-INTOXICATED. WHAT RELIGIOUS MANIACS DESCRIBE, AND WHAT THE OLD PRIESTS OF PAN USED TO CALL--ECSTASY.
AFTER THAT NIGHT I CAME BACK. I CAME BACK AT DAWN, UNDER A COMPULSION BORN OF INTOXICATION AND THE INNER URGE UPON ME. I CAME BACK TO STARE AT THE CREATURE IN THE CAGE.
TO STARE AT THE RED EYES IN THE DARKNESS WHICH GLISTENED LIKE TWO DISTANT WHIRLING WORLDS OF EVIL.
TWO DISTANT WORLDS THAT CAME CLOSER, MERGED AND BLENDED WITH OUR OWN WORLD, BLENDED WITH MY OWN BRAIN.
I told Keith about our experience the night before with the strangely cowed creature in the cage.
PART OF ME MUST HAVE ENTERED INTO IT WHEN IT TOOK MY BODY. BY NIGHTFALL IT WASN'T MY BODY ANYMORE.
I WENT TO THE BALL, AND YOU KNOW THE REST.
INCREDIBLE!
MY LEG DRAGGED. I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, BUT I DIDN'T CARE. I HAD THIS ECSTASY, THIS FORCE, DRIVING ME.

PROFESSOR, YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST. PERHAPS A FEW DAYS IN THE HOSPITAL--
I CAN'T, MY DEAR. I CAN'T. DON'T YOU SEE?
WE HAVE HIM TO DEAL WITH!
SATAN STOOD BLACK, ERECT, AND MENACING. THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE HATE, THE THWARTED DESIRE IN THOSE BURNING EYES.
OH, DEAR.
WE THOUGHT WE HAD HIM TRAPPED, BUT YOU SEE-- WE HAVEN'T. HE HAS FOUND THE WAY TO GET OUT. HE CAN TAKE POSSESSION OF THE HUMAN BODY AND WALK THE EARTH AS A MAN. WE MUST GET RID OF HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WE MUST!
TAKE IT EASY. WE UNDERSTAND.
BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, YOU CAN'T! I'LL NEVER REST UNTIL WE'VE FOUND A WAY TO SEND HIM BACK TO HELL.
PRIVATE
YOU'LL REST, LILY AND I WILL GET TO WORK, I PROMISE YOU.
YES, SEND HIM BACK.
SEND HIM BACK BEFORE--
HE'S PASSED OUT.
GOOD, PHONE FOR AN AMBULANCE. WE'LL CARRY HIM OUT TO THE LOBBY. HE NEEDS HOSPITAL ATTENTION.
NOT A WORD OF THIS NOW, TO ANYONE. WE ALONE SHARE THIS SECRET AND WE ALONE MUST SOLVE IT.
KEITH WAS RIGHT. WE MUST FIND A WAY TO SEND THIS FOUL, EVIL CREATURE BACK.
WE'LL KEEP SILENT. SEND THAT THING BACK TO WHEREVER IT CAME FROM, USE ANY METHOD YOU WANT, AND CHARGE THE BILL TO ME.
AND MAY GOD HELP YOU IN THE TASK.

As Lily and I made a start, I thought of the look on Cornelius's face. What had he seen in the cage? What did his Devil look like?
I'LL GIVE YOU HALF OF THESE INCANTATIONS. LOOK FOR A SPELL OF REMOVAL.
As the night wore on, I got to thinking about Ruth's version. The red gentleman: THE MASTER OF THE GREAT BLACK LODGE.
GUY.
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING?
NO. FALSE ALARM. SORRY.
How many Devils was I responsible for? Eight books. Best-sellers. And yet, none of them came close to the horror of the goat-thing that glared at me from the cage.
ANYTHING?
NO. NOTHING.
As the sun came up, I recognized my failure as a writer. I had been HOLDING BACK.
ANY LUCK?
I'M AFRAID IT'S NO USE.
THERE ARE NO FORMULAE HERE TO GET RID OF HIM.
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO SEND HIM BACK.
NOT BY INCANTATION.
Lily's hopeless glance met mine. We turned, by common impulse, to the glass cage in the center of the room. Black, brooding, baleful, the Goat of the Sabbath crouched on the floor.
The leering, beady eyes rested scornfully on our own. Yellowed fangs menaced in a derisive grin.
CAN HE HEAR US?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. HE KNOWS. HE'S WAITING, TOO.

WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS FOREVER. IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS ALREADY. IF ANYONE SHOULD SUSPECT WHAT WE HAVE HERE--
WAIT A MINUTE! I'VE GOT IT!
WHERE DID KEITH GET THAT GLASS CAGE?
IT HAD BEEN USED IN LAB EXPERIMENTS TO ANESTHETIZE LARGE ANIMALS!
THAT TANK OVER THERE UNDER THE TABLE -- IT'S GOT THE TUBING ATTACHED. THAT'S THE LETHAL GAS.
WE JUST PLUG INTO THE PANEL AT THE SIDE, AND THE GAS IS RELEASED. HAND-PUMP. COME ON, I'LL SHOW YOU.
It wasn't easy to brave the ghoulish stare of the creature in the cage.
My hands fumbled with the nozzle of the hose.
At last, it screwed into place.
I thought I heard the thing scream, or maybe it was my imagination.
I HOPE IT WORKS.
YEAH.
I pumped.
There was a hissing, the imitation tube writhed like a serpent.
A cloudy vapor poured into the glass enclosure. I couldn't watch. I kept my eyes on the nozzle on the panel.
I pumped harder.
The black figure vanished suddenly in a swirl of poisonous fog.
The pump sighed quietly.

It was easier to feel the reassuring firmness of the hand-pump handle now that the task was done and the Devil was dying.
So why was I having trouble breathing?
GUY, LOOK!
THE SMOKE IS CLEARING.
CLEARING? THERE'S NOWHERE FOR IT TO GO!
We tried water.
He absorbed it, of course.
WE COULD TRY AN ARC-WELDER.
YOU CAN'T KILL THE DEVIL WITH FIRE.
YOU'RE EXHAUSTED, GUY. GO INTO THE PRIVATE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL AND TAKE A NAP. THERE'S A COUCH THERE. I'LL FIND AN INCANTATION.
AND LEAVE YOU HERE ALONE WITH THAT? NOT ON YOUR LIFE.
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO KEITH.
KEITH WAS ALMOST OUT ON HIS FEET. HIS MENTAL BARRIERS WERE DOWN. I'M NO PUSHOVER.
RUN ALONG NOW AND GET YOUR REST. I PROMISE TO GET OUT OF HERE IN AN HOUR OR SO.
I WON'T EVEN LOOK AT OUR FRIEND HERE.


PRIVATE
I left the room.
Lily Ross sat down, ran her hands through her golden hair, and opened the black book on the desk.
In the dancing light of the braziers, she looked as she had when I first saw her--
--like a white witch.
"MALIGNANT, TRIUMPHANT, THE BLACK GOAT PRANCED. ITS EYES SHONE WITH EVIL MERRIMENT, WITH A SORT OF ADDED ANIMATION."
That's how it opened. My third book, HELL HATH NO FURY. Lily told me it was her favorite. She even quoted a passage:
"THE SLIM FIGURE WEAVES A WHITE PATTERN ACROSS THE FAR SIDE OF THE BLACK CHAMBER.
"FLAMES BLOSSOMED IN HER FINGERS AS SHE BENT OVER THE BRAZIERS IN THE NICHES.
"SHE REKINDLED THEIR DYING FIRES.
"FROM A POUCH AT HER WAIST--
"--SHE SCATTERED FINE DUST--
"--UPON THE EMBERS.
"THE FIRES FLARED UPWARD--NOT RED NOW, BUT GREEN AND BLUE AND PURPLE. A KALEIDOSCOPE OF DIABOLIC LUMINANCE.
"RED TONGUES ROSE FROM THE CANDLE TIPS AND LAPPED AT THE DARKNESS. THICK, BLOATED CANDLES, LIKE THE PUFFY FINGERS OF A GIGANTICALLY SWOLLEN CORPSE--THICK, BLOATED CANDLES, FED BY A SLIM WHITE PRIESTESS.
"WHITE WITCH!"
In my dreams, the novel came true. Lily Ross was the white witch and I was under her spell.

WAKE UP, YOU BAD BOY. YOU'VE BROKEN YOUR PROMISE!
HUH--?
MY PROMISE?
YOU'VE OVERSLEPT!
DIDN'T KNOW I WAS SO TIRED. HOW LONG HAVE I--
THREE HOURS.
YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU HAD SOME LUCK. FIND ANYTHING?
WELL-- YES AND NO.
THERE'S A CHANT IN THE PRINN SARRCENIC RITUALS THAT COULD BE USED, BUT THE GERMAN TRANSLATION IS BAD. VERY BAD.
I'LL STAY LATE AND CHECK IT AGAINST THE LATIN. YOU GO HOME.
BUT I'M FRIGHTENED. OF THE DARK AND... OF HIM.
I NEED YOU TONIGHT. I NEED LIGHT AND PEOPLE AND LAUGHTER.
LET'S GO OUT AND TAKE IN THE TOWN, GUY. IT'LL BE OUR NIGHT TO REMEMBER.
The suggestion was pleasant. Alluring. Alluring as Lily herself. She sparkled.
She slipped one arm in mine, possessively. I felt a tingle as her bare flesh met my wrist.
her golden hair, the scarlet of her lips, the turquoise of her eyes--all seemed accentuated by inner fire.
No one suspected that the golden girl on my arm was actually a white witch.
I almost laughed.

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'D BE BETTER OFF IF I TOOK YOU HOME AND YOU GOT SOME REST, LILY?
NO, BILLY. NOW I'M GOING TO RELAX.
Her eyes sparkled with gaiety.
But when I looked at her again, the semi-darkness of the cab's interior had wrought another change.
She wasn't a white witch anymore.
Her hair seemed darker. The golden tint was gone.
The scarlet of her lips had turned to rose. A trick of late afternoon light.
It was twilight in the taxi.
And Lily's hair was gray. Not gray, exactly, and not platinum. There was a bluish tint.
Her lips were purple.
Her lips were purple--or I was crazy.
Seeing things.
A girl who changed in light and shadow. What was that--?
White witch--Black witch--Blue witch.
Circe had that power.
Under the red drapes, I saw her titian locks flame forth in evil glory, saw her tawny skin glow, saw the crimson depths of her eyes.
CLICK
Red witch now!

I held the red witch in my arms, held a living flame close. Held her closer than I had ever held her, and felt her response. Her response was flame.
That fire engulfed me.
The warmth of her glowing hair, the warmth of her eyes, the red glow of her mouth.
Her words no longer mattered. I was consumed by the flame of her nearness. The red, swift flame coursing through my blood and being.
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS. YOU AND I, TOGETHER.
WE'RE GOING TO DO WONDERFUL THINGS.
I THOUGHT WE ALREADY WERE.
CHILD'S PLAY. IT HAS NO REAL MEANING AT ALL.
WHAT?
YOU AND I WERE MEANT FOR GREATER DESTINIES.
YOU'VE THE BRAINS.
I HAVE THE BEAUTY.
I COULD BE A QUEEN--
I knew now what I had held in my arms.
Lips or no lips... I knew.
WE HAVE THE POWER NOW.
THE POWER TO COMMAND!
WITH OUR SPELLS AND INCANTATIONS, THERE ARE NO HEIGHTS WE CANNOT ACHIEVE!

I COULD BE A QUEEN!!
Her panting breath rasped as her hands raked my chest.
Just a short uppercut to the chin.
As the pointed fangs met, I shook her free.
She slumped across the bed.
A feline growl rose in her throat.
I had to do it.
She lay there, eyes closed, a golden witch under the lamplight.
From her bruised mouth ran a tiny crimson trickle.
The sleeping sorceress...
It took three minutes before her eyes fluttered open.
By that time, I'd gotten cold water, a towel, brandy.
I'd gotten EVERYTHING I needed.
I thought of the large, sales figures on "HELL HATH NO FURY," proclaiming me a success.
What could I have been thinking of?

I'M SORRY, LILY.
BUT THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
She didn't believe me.
LOOK!
NO--TAKE IT AWAY--- PLEASE---
NO--YOU FOOL-- LET ME GO-- I CAN'T--
I drew it off and stared at the livid welt.
The imprint of the cross burned into her white flesh.
NOO
I dared not desist. I knew what had to be done.
EXORCISM. THE CASTING OUT OF DEMONS.

FIGHT IT, LILY. COME BACK, LILY, COME BACK.
The tremors came then.
Her hands darted like talons to her temples, as though to tear away the scar.
the force within her blazed in a final excess of fury. She writhed in agony.
they bubbled up from beneath her flesh.
Malignant expressions of hate and rage.
That's when my hand trembled so that I very nearly dropped the cross.
Her face began to look like... OTHER faces.
the demented.
the faces of madness.
I had started with a page from my own book, HELL HATH NO FURY. Lily's favorite passage, - the source of this thing -- her personal Devil.
The expressions seen on the faces of the schizophrenic.
I suddenly realized that I was working backwards.
I had taken that page of type and was struggling to erase it. To get back to that blank page, that I had earlier noticed in Lily's innocent gaze.
I decided then and there that I would undo the damage I had caused by my writings.
I made a holy vow.

In the morning's awakening, we came to an understanding.
I told her what she didn't know--and she told me what I had guessed.
She had experienced the "dizzy spells" while working alone in the chamber.
I'M GOING BACK THERE.
YOU NEED REST. I'LL CARRY ON ALONE.
I'M FOREWARNED AS WELL AS FOREARMED BY WHAT YOU AND KEITH HAVE GONE THROUGH.
GUY
I WON'T SUCCUMB. I PROMISE YOU--NOT UNTIL I'VE FOUND A WAY TO GET RID OF HIS SATANIC MAJESTY ONCE AND FOR ALL.
BE CAREFUL, GUY.
HAS TO BE DONE.
IF YOU OR KEITH HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO CONTINUE, IT MIGHT HAVE SPREAD LIKE A PLAGUE.
EITHER WE GET RID OF SATAN OR HE GETS RID OF US. THAT'S THE BARGAIN.
YOU'LL CALL ME REGULARLY?
OF COURSE.
AND IN A DAY OR TWO, BOTH YOU AND KEITH CAN COME DOWN AGAIN TO HELP.
BUT NOW--BACK TO HELL.
MAY GOD BE WITH YOU.

PRIVATE

That night we worked alone, the Devil and I, in that Black Tower.

The red dragons burned like a beacon, but the real glare from his eyes, blazed a stronger warning.

All alone in the dark room, behind locked doors. A crouching fiend in a cage.

A crouching man at a table.

And the Powers of Darkness.

I turned the yellowed pages of a dozen bulky books. I scanned the hand-writing of a thousand years ago. Learning the mantic arts was a grim business.

Here was the White Magic -- the nine steps in the evocation of Angels. The command of the Seven Stewards of Heaven. -- Arathron, Bethor, Phaleg, Och, Hagith, Ophiel, and Phul.

White Magic, and a jumble of theosophical arcanum which would be of no use here. Wrong lead.

Black Magic -- ashes of hosts and dried toads -- unguents of grease and blood of corpses, horned owl-human bones -- burning crucifixes -- gibberish. Key Magic ? The highest esoteric art was never written down or passed along. Nothing there. Try divination.

I tried divination for hours. Long hours in the black room. Long hours under hell-slashed eyes. Eyes that watched me as I sweated. Eyes that seemed to pierce me. Eyes that seemed to glance over my shoulder as I read.

The file on divination was huge. Could I evoke an oracle ? There was aeromancy. alectryomancy. aleuromancy. alphitomancy. But I had neither wind nor rooster. Flour nor hand dough. Aminomancy. Use the caul of a newborn child ? No. And the horrid anthropomancy prophecy by use of human birthtaile. No, again.

Arithomancy. Astragalomancy. Both mathematical tricks, long since discredited. Axinomancy and Belomancy were relics of the old "trial by ordeal" of Saxon days. Capnomancy. Divination by smoke -- wreaths from a dying sonnilez fire ? Hasnash visions A fake.

Cephalomancy. Dactylomancy. Gastromancy. Geomancy. Hydromancy. I had no donkey's head to sprinkle with live coals, no finger ring, no gait for ventriloquism, nor was I a stand-diviner

Oh, sure. Sorcery is fascinating, but you always get

Hippomancy. The Celtic Trick with white horses. Cut. Hydromancy. Ichthyomancy. Lampodomancy. Lithomancy. Margaritomancy. Myrmecomancy. Onomancy. Onychomancy. Oomancy. Pantheromancy. Fine, stuff ! All superstitious nonsense though. Cutting some throats, maybe a virgin -- might prove entertaining.

Spondylomancy. Sycomancy. Theomancy. That was the God of Divination. And still Nellan stirred. I was becoming more and more conscious of that stare. Satan grinned and the grin burned through me. It seemed my failure. I'd find a way. I had to.

There was no sleep for me that day.

ementals
It was almost midnight when I blundered back into the notebooks and hit the section on ELEMENTALS.
Elementals. The primitive spirits. The Gnomes inherent in Earth own the kingdom of the North, and they exert their melancholic influence over the temperament of man.
Thier sign is the bull, and they are commanded by the Magic Sword.
Their sovereign is Gob.
Yes! I had written about the Gnome Kingdom in THE SIGN OF THE BULL, a book that had done especially well on college campuses, for some reason. I had researched it carefully, but not with the intricacy I found here. Actual spells to command the gnomes, written in Lily Ross's handwriting, taken from the tomes. Precise directions for drawing figures, reciting commands, and mixing incense.
A PINCH OF SALT AND A TABLESPOON OF BUTTER. BAKE WELL UNDER LOW FLAME.
Not exactly. More accurately: a pinch of ground bone and a cup of blood. Sizzled over the fires of Hell.
These recipes might affect the stomach, but only with a nausea of dread.
I was light-headed. Here were nearly a hundred proven spells and incantations.
I had to try, didn't I? Find a way to evoke, familiarize myself with rituals? Why shouldn't I take this perfectly absurd routine about the gnomes, for instance, and see what happened? Lily's marginal notes informed me of the sword on the cupboard, on the lower shelf. I remembered my research. The Magic Sword was formed of steel, for steel alone guards and commands gnomes.
I had the silly-looking old blade in my hand before I knew what I was doing. I had the blue chalk, Boo as directed, and I was kneeling down facing the North Kingdom.
THE GNOME KINGDOM.
I drew the mathematical sign as directed. I drew the sign of the bull, the peculiarly Egyptian sign so indicative of ancient civilization.
The evil of Hole, of astrology of ancient times
A blue bull.
I made it big
The gnome supposedly materializes on that sign and cannot leave it until you command
I drew it big to stay safe
d I stay safe!
at chance.

OH, GOD...
It sounded foolish self-conscious... Grimm's fairy tales.
I realised what a ridiculous figure I cut, waving a "Magic Sword" before a chalk drawing scribbled schoolboy-fashion on the floor
BUT I persisted
I CALL TO YOU, GOB.
Then I felt the electrical surge sweep up my arm.
A cold wind struck my face and chilled me to my bones. I had succeeded.
It had been easy.
WHAT HAVE I DONE ?
MASTER ?
I'VE... CREATED YOU.
THE SWORD.
THIS IS THE SWORD OF COMMAND
The thought hit me and it changed my life.
I... COMMAND YOU !

The thought burned like Satan's eyes.
I drew the Lion, kindled the flame, waved the trident.
The lizard figure, Grew from the fire, absorbed it.
MMASSSTER?
MASTER OF DEMONS MASTER OF EVIL.
LORD OF A POWER GREATER THAN ANY KNOWN!
Kerm had been a fool, needing allies. One man to rule -- that was the way. And Lily...
her mistake was to rely on me for help
I wouldn't make that mistake. I and I alone would rule. I had the power. I had Satan in a cage.
I could take his place.
THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE KING!

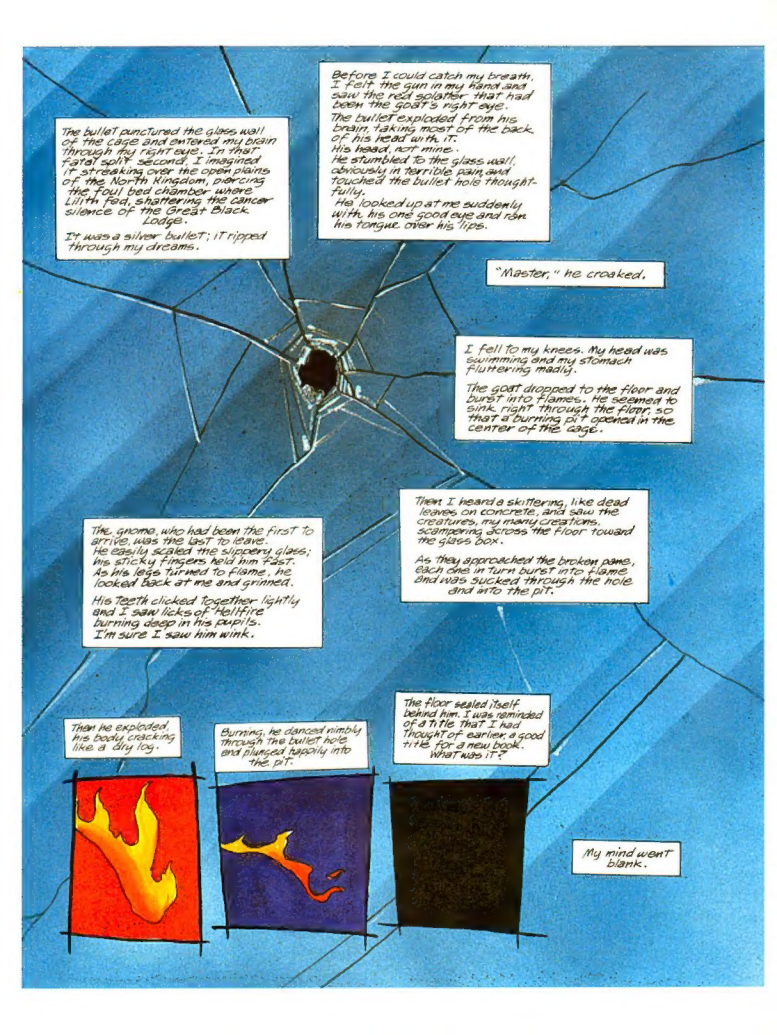
WHY NOT? WHY NOT?
Why not evoke? Use the rituals. Use all of them. Fill the room with a legion of nightmare shapes.
WHY NOT!!
A black army. An army to conquer the world.
A world filled with man-made war and misery.
A world filled with pestilence. Plague.
Disease.
I stood there, amidst a crowded maze of circles and designs, each containing a twisted, bowed figure.
I stood there before the mangy, decrepit, listless dog of beasts, the whimpering mongrel that once had been Satan.

I stood there and made a hell on Earth.

SLOWLY NOW, PROFESSOR.
DO YOU THINK HE'S DONE IT, LILY? SENT HIM BACK? DO YOU THINK--
I DON'T KNOW. HE DIDN'T SAY.
VATE
GUY SOUNDED EXCITED ON THE PHONE, BUT HE WOULDN'T TELL ME ANYTHING.
HE SAID HE WANTED TO SURPRISE US.
They were surprised, all right.
They didn't say a word. Couldn't.
It was too overpowering.
My sin
Around the glass cage housing Satan, the legions swarmed.
One of each.
Hell's sample-display showroom.
TAKE YOUR PICK, LILY.
HAHAHA HAHAHA
PLENTY MORE WHERE THESE CAME FROM.
JUST LOOK AT THEM ALL.
I HAVE SO MANY CHILDREN.

THEY ARE... MONSTERS! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU LOST CONTROL?
YOU STILL DON'T RECOGNIZE ME?
THE MASTER OF THE GREAT BLACK LODGE!
THE SIGN OF THE BULL!
HELL HATH NO FURY!
I AM THE CREATOR, THE ORGANIZATOR OF EVIL!
YOUR FRUSTRATED FRIEND HAD IMAGINATION! HE HAD AN ADMIRABLE FLARE FOR THE PERVERSE! TOO BAD HE DRIED UP.
I'VE AFFORDED HIM A PLACE OF HONOR.
MOVE AWAY FROM THE CAGE NOW!
WAIT. THERE'S A MESSAGE FORMING ON THE GLASS.
IT'S FROM GUY! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I WORSHIP SATAN!
I WORSHIP SATAN! HE IS
I WORSHIP SATAN! HE IS

I WORSHIP SATAN! HE IS MY GREATEST CR
I WORSHIP SATAN! HE IS MY GREATEST CREATION!
I AM NO CREATION!!!
I AM...THE... CREATOR!
I... AM THE...
I AM...
POW!


The bullet punctured the glass wall of the cage and entered my brain through my right eye. In that fatal split second, I imagined it streaking over the open plains of the North Kingdom, piercing the foul bed chamber where Lilith fed, shattering the cancer silence of the Great Black Lodge.
It was a silver bullet; it tripped through my dreams.
Before I could catch my breath, I felt the gun in my hand and saw the red splatter that had been the goat's right eye.
The bullet exploded from his brain, taking most of the back of his head with it.
His head, not mine.
He stumbled to the glass wall, obviously in terrible pain, and touched the bullet hole thoughtfully.
He looked up at me suddenly with his one good eye and ran his tongue over his lips.
"Master," he croaked.
I fell to my knees. My head was swimming and my stomach fluttering madly.
The goat dropped to the floor and burst into flames. He seemed to sink right through the floor, so that a burning pit opened in the center of the cage.
Then I heard a skittering, like dead leaves on concrete, and saw the creatures, my many creations, scampering across the floor toward the glass box.
As they approached the broken pane, each one in turn burst into flame and was sucked through the hole and into the pit.
The gnome, who had been the first to arrive, was the last to leave. He easily scaled the slippery glass; his sticky fingers held him fast. As his legs turned to flame, he looked back at me and grinned.
His teeth clicked together lightly and I saw licks of hellfire burning deep in his pupils. I'm sure I saw him wink.
Then he exploded, his body cracking like a dry log.
Burning, he danced nimbly through the bullet hole and plunged happily into the pit.
The floor sealed itself behind him. I was reminded of a title that I had thought of earlier: a good title for a new book. What was it?
My mind went blank.

I stayed behind after the others left.
I had a few things to get straight in my mind.
Where had I gone wrong?
It was the books. I had made my mistake in writing those twisted, demented novels.
This time, it would be different.
This time, the story was true.
I felt exhilarated, half intoxicated. What I can only describe as ecstasy.
No.
Was this what it came down to? An endless struggle against temptation?
I was right back where I'd started from.
I had been living on coffee and hope, staying away from the bottle.
I hadn't written in weeks.
Now here I was again, preparing to face that blank page, and those long, torturous nights.
The hell with that.

tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-